

S A M S O N.

A N

O R A T O R I O.

As Performed at the

Theatres Royal *Drury-Lane*, and *Covent-Garden*.

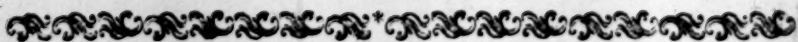
The MUSIC Composed by Mr. HANDEL.



L O N D O N

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Dramatis Personæ.

I S R A E L I T E S.

Samson.

Manoa.

Micah.

An Israelite Officer.

P H I L I S T I N E S.

Dalia.

Harapha.

Chorus of Philistine Women, &c.



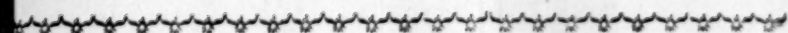
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S A M S O N.

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A C T I. S C E N E I.

*Samson blind; and in Chains. Chorus of the Priests of
Dagon celebrating his Festival.*

S A M S O N.

THIS day a solemn feast to Dagon held
Relieves me from my task of servile toil:
Unwillingly their superstition yields
This rest! to breathe Heaven's air fresh blowing,
pure and sweet.

*Chorus of the Priests of Dagon,
Awake the trumpet's lofty sound;
The joyful sacred festival comes round;
When Dagon, King of all the earth is crown'd.*

A I R.

*Ye men of Gaza, hither bring,
The merry pipe and pleasing string,
The solemn hymn and chearful song;
Be Dagon prais'd by ev'ry tongue.*

[Chorus repeated.]

A I R.

*Loud as the thunder's awful voice,
In notes of triumph, notes of praise,
So high great Dagon's name we'll raise,
That heav'n and earth may bear how we rejoice.*

Sampson. Why by an Angel was my birth foretold,
If I must die, betray'd and captiv'd thus,
The scorn and gaze of foes---O cruel thought!
My griefs find no redress; they inward prey,
Like gangreen'd wounds, *im*medicably grown.

A I R.

Sampson. Torments, alas! are not confin'd
To heart, or head, or breast;
But will a secret passage find,
Into the very inmost mind,
With pains intense oppress,
That rob the soul itself of rest.

S C E N E II.

Sampson Micah, and Chorus of Israelites.

Micah. [*apart.*] O change beyond report, thought
or belief!

See how he lies with languish'd head, unprop'd!
Abandon'd! past all hope! can this be he?
Heroick Sampson? whom no strength of man,
Nor fury of the fiercest beast could quell?
Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid;
Ran weaponless on armies, clad in iron,
Useless the temper'd steel, or coat of mail.

A I R.

Micah. *O mirrour of our fickle state!
In birth, in strength, in deeds how great!
From highest glory fall'n so low,
Sunk in the deep abyss of woe.*

Samson. [*apart.*] Whom have I to complain of but myself?

Who Heaven's great trust could not in silence keep,
But weakly to a woman must reveal it?

Micah. [*To Samson.*] Matchless in [might! once
Israel's glory, now her grief;

We come, thy friends well known, to visit thee,

Samson. Welcome my friends. [*or lost fight?*

Micah. Which shall we first bewail, thy bondage

Samson. O loss of fight! of thee I most complain;
O worse than beggary, old age, or chains!
My very soul in darkness dwells!

A I R.

Samson. *Total eclipse! no Sun, no Moon!
All dark amidst the blaze of noon!
O glorious light! no chearing ray
To glad my eyes with welcome day:
Why thus depriv'd thy prime decree,
Sun, Moon, and Stars are dark to me.*

C H O R U S.

O first created Beam! and thou great World!
Let there be light! and light was over all,
One heav'nly blaze shone round this earthly ball.
To thy dark servant life by light afford.

Samson. You see, my friends, how woes enclose
me round :

But, had I fight, how cou'd I heave my head
For shame ? Thus for a word, or tear, divulge
To a false woman God's most sacred gift.
And then be sung or proverb'd for a fool.

Micah. Here comes thy reverend sire, old Manoa.
With careful steps and locks as white as down.

Samson. Alas ! another grief that name awakes.

S C E N E III.

Samson, Micah, Manoa, and the Chorus of Israelitee.

Manoa. Brethren, and men of Dan, say, where's
my son ?

Samson. fond Israel's boast ; inform my age.

Micah. As signal now in low dejected state,
As in the height of pow'r : see where he lies.

Manoa. O miserable change ! is this the man
Renown'd afar, the dread of Israel's foes ?
Who with an angel's strength their armies duell'd,
Himself an army ; now unequal match
To guard his breast against the coward's spear.

“ *Manoa accompanied.* The good we wish'd for,
“ often proves our bane,

“ I pray'd for children---and I gain'd a son---

“ And such a son, as all men hail'd me happy ;

“ But who'd be now a father in my stead ?

“ The blessing drew a scorpion's tail behind :

“ This plant (select and sacred for a while,

“ The miracle of all !) was in one hour ensnar'd,

“ Assaulted, overcome, led bound---

" His foes derision---captive---
 " Poor and blind."

A I R.

Manoa. *Thy glorious deeds inspir'd my tongue,
 Whilst airs of joy from thence did flow;
 To sorrow now I tune my song,
 And set my harp to notes of woe.*

Samson. Justly these evils have befall'n thy son;
 Sole author I, sole cause. My griefs for this,
 Forbid mine eyes to close, or thoughts to rest:
 But now the strife shall end; me overthrown,
 Dagon presumes to enter lists with God;
 Who, thus provok'd, will not connive, but rouse
 His fury soon, and his great name assert.
 Dagon shall stoop, ere long be quite despol'd
 Of all those boasted trophies won on me.

A I R.

Sam. *Let not the God of Isr'el sleep:
 Arise with dreadful sound,
 And clouds encompass round,
 Then shall the heathen hear thy thunder deep.
 The tempest of thy wrath now raise.
 In whirlwidd them pursue,
 Full fraught with vengeance due,
 'Till shame and trouble all thy foes shall seize.*

Micab. There lies our hope: true prophet may'st
 thou be,
 That God may vindicate his glorious name;
 Nor let us doubt whether God is Lord, or Dagon.

C H O R U S.

Then shall they know, that he whose name
 Jehovah is alone,
 O'er all the earth but one,
 Was ever the most high and still the same.

Manoa. For thee, my dearest son, must thou mean
 while

Lie thus neglected in this loathsome plight ?

Samson. It shou'd be so : why should I live ?
 Soon shall these orbs a double darkness yield
 My genial spirits droop, my hopes are flat ;
 Nature in me seems weary of herself ;
 My race of glory run, and race of shame ;
 Death invoked oft' shall end my pains,
 And lay me gently down with them that rest.

Micah. Then long eternity shall greet your bliss,
 No more of earthly joys, so false and vain !

A I R.

Micah. *Joys that are pure sincerely good,
 Shall then o'ertake you as a flood :
 Where truth and peace do ever shine,
 With love that's perfectly divine.*

C H O R U S.

Then round about the starry throne
 Of him who ever rules alone,
 Your heavenly-guided soul shall climb ;
 Of all this earthly grossness quit,
 With glory crown'd, for ever sit,
 And triumph over Death, and thee, O Time.

A C T II. S C E N E I.

Samson, Micah, Manoah, and the Chorus of Israelites.

M A N O A.

TRUST yet in God; the Father's timely care
Shall prosecute the means to free thee thence!
Mean time, all healing words, from these thy friends
admit.

Samson. My evils hopeless are; one pray'r remains,
A speedy death to close my miseries.

Micah. Relieve thy champion, image of thy
strength;
And turn his labours to a peaceful end.

A I R.

Micah. Return, O God of Hosts! behold
Thy servant in distress,
His mighty griefs redress.
Nor by the heathen be they told.

C H O R U S.

To dust his glory they would tread,
And number him among the dead.

S C E N E II.

*Samson, Micah, Dalila, Chorus of Israelites, and Vir-
gins attending Dalila.*

Micah. But who is this, that so bedeck'd and gay.
Comes this way sailing like a stately ship;
'Tis Dalila thy wife.

Samson. My wife! my trait'ers: Let her not come
near me.

Micah. She stands, and eyes the fix'd, with head
declin'd,
(Like a fair flow'r surcharg'd with dew, she weeps;

B

Her words address'd to thee seem tears dissolv'd,
Wetting the borders of a silken vail.

Dalila. With doubtful feet, and wav'ring resolution,
I come, O Samson ! dreading thy displeasure ;
But conjugal affection led me on,
Prevailing over fear and tim'rous doubt.

Samson. Out, thou Hyenæ ! 'twas malice brought
thee here ;

These are the arts of women false, like thee,
To break all vows, repent, deceive, submit ;
Then, with instructed skill, again transgress.

Dalila. I wou'd not lessen my offence, yet beg
To weigh it by itself ;

A mutual weakness mutual pardon claims.

Samson. How cunningly the forcerefs displays
Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine ?
I to myself was false, ere thou to me ;
Bitter reproach ! but true. The pardon then
I to my folly gave take thou to thine.

A I R

Dalila. *With plaintive notes and am'rous moan
Thus cooes the turtle dove alone ;
Like her averse to each delight,
She wears the tedious widow'd night ;
But when her absent mate returns,
With double rapture then she burns.*

Samson. Did love constrain thee ? no, 'twas
raging lust.

Love seeks for love, thy treason fought my hate,
In vain you strive to cover shame with shame :
Once join'd to me, tho' judg'd your country's foe,
Parents and all, were in the husband lost.

A I R.

*Your charms to ruin led the way,
My sense deprav'd.*

*My strength enslav'd,
As I did love, you did betray.
How great the curse ! How hard my fate
To pass life's sea with such a mate.*

Dalila. Forgive what's done, nor think of what's
past cure ;

From forth this prison-house come home to me,
Where with redoubled love, and nursing care,
(To my glad office !) my virgins and myself
Shall tend about thee to extremest age.

A I R.

Dalila. *My faith and truth, O Samson, prove ;
But hear me, hear the voice of love ;
With love no mortal can be cloy'd,
All happiness is love enjoy'd.*

Chorus of Virgins.

Her faith and truth, O Samson, prove,
But hear her, hear the voice of love.

A I R.

Dalila. *To fleeting pleasures make your court,
No moment lose for life is short,
The present now's our only time,
The missing that our only crime.
How charming is domestic ease !
A thousand ways I'll strive to please :
Life is not lost, tho' lost your sigh,
Let other senses taste delight.*

CHORUS repeated.

“ Her faith and truth, O Samson, prove,
“ But hear her, hear the voice of love.”

Samson. Ne'er think of that ; I know thy warbling
charms,

Thy strains, thy wiles, and fair enchanted cup ;
Their force is null'd ; when once I have been caught,

I shun the snare ; these chains, this prison-house
I count the house of liberty to thine,

Dalila. Let me approach at least, and touch thy
hand.

Samson. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance
wake

My sudden rage, to tear the limb from limb :

At distance I forgive ; depart with that :

Now triumph in thy falsehood ; so farewell.

Dalila. Thou art more deaf to pray'rs than winds
or seas.

Thy anger rages an eternal tempest ;

Why should I humbly sue for peace, thus scorn'd,

With infamy upon my name denounc'd ?

D U E T.

Dalila. *Traitor to love, I'll sue no more
For pardon scorn'd, your threats give o'er.*

Sam. *Traitress to love, I'll bear no more
The charmer's voice, your arts give o'er.*

S C E N E III.

*Samson, Micah, Harapha, Chorus of Israelites, and
Priests of Dagon.*

Micah. No words of peace. no voice enchanting
fear,

A rougher tongue expect.---Here's Harapha,
I know him by his pride and haughty look.

Harapha. I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance ;
I am of Gath, men call me Harapha ;

Thou know'st me now ; of thy prodigious might
Much have I heard, incredible to me !

Ner less displeas'd that never in the field

We met to try each other's deeds of strength :

I'd see if thy appearance answers loud report.

Samson. The way to know, were not to see, but
taste.

Hara. Ha! dost thou then already single me?
 I thought that labour and thy chains had tam'd thee.
 Had fortune brought me to that field of death,
 Where thou wrought'st wonders with an ass's jaw,
 I'd left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown.

Samson. Boast not of what thou would'st have
 done but do.

Hara. The honour certain to have won from thee
 I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out;
 To combat with a blind man, I disdain.

A I R.

*Honour and arms scorn such a foe,
 Tho' I could end thee at a blow;
 Poor victory,
 To conquer thee,
 Or glory in thy overthrow:
 Vanquish a slave that is half slain!
 So mean a triumph I disdain.*

Samson. Cam'st thou for this, vain boaster? yet
 take heed;

My heels are fetter'd, but my hands are free.
 Thou bulk of spirit void, I once again,
 Blind, and in chains, provoke thee to the fight.

Hara. O Dagon! can I hear this insolence,
 To me unus'd, not rend'ring instant death?

D U E T.

Samson. Go, baffled coward, go,
 Lest vengeance lay thee low;
 In safety fly my wrath with speed.

Hara. Presume not on thy God,
 Who under foot has trod
 Thy strength and thee, at greatest need.

Both. Go baffled coward, go, &c.
 Presume not on thy God, &c.

Micah. Here lies the proof:--If Dagon be thy God,

With high devotion invoke his aid,
 His Glory is concern'd. Let him dissolve
 Those magic spells that gave our hero strength,
 Then know whose God is God; Dagon of mortal
 make,
 Or that great one whom Abr'am's sons adore.

Chorus of Israelites.

Hear Jacob's God! Jehovah, hear!
 O save us prostrate at thy throne,
 Isr'el depends on thee alone;
 Save us, and shew that thou art near.
Hara, Dagon, arise! attend thy sacred feast;
 Thy honour calls, this day admits no rest.

Chorus of the Priests of Dagon.

To song and dance we give the day.
 Which shews thy universal sway.
 Protect us by thy mighty hand,
 And sweep this race from out the land.

Chorus of both.

Both Chorus's. Fix'd in his everlasting seat,
Chorus of Israelites. Jehovah rules the world in
 state.

Chorus Priests of Dagon. Great Dagon rules the world
 in state.

Both. His thunder roars Heav'n shakes and earth's
 aghaft,

The stars with deep amaze.
 Remain in stedfast gaze,

Chorus of Israelites. Jehovah is of Gods the first
 and last.

Chorus Priests of Dagon. Great Dagon is of Gods the
 first and last.

A C T III. S C E N E I.

Samson. *¶* Micah, and the Chorus of Israelites.

M I C A H.

RELECT then, Samson, matters now are strain'd
Up to the height, whether to hold or break.
He's gone whose malice may inflame the Lords.

Samson. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift
Of strength, again returning with my hair,
By vaunting it in honour to their God,
And prostituting holy things to idols?

Micah. How thou wilt here come off surmounts
my reach;

'Tis Heav'n alone can save both us and thee.

Chorus of Israelites.

With thunder arm'd, great God arise;

Help, Lord, or Isr'el's champion dies;

" To thy protection this thy servant take,

" And save, O save us for thy servant's sake.

" With thunder arm'd great God arise;

" Help, Lord, or Isr'el's champion dies.

Samson. Be of good courage, I begin to feel
Some inward motions, which do bid me go.

Micah. In time thou hast resolv'd, again he comes.

Hara. Samson, this second summons sends our lords:
Haste thee at once, or we shall engines find
To move thee, tho' thou wert a solid rock.

Samson. Vain were their art if try'd; I yield to go,
Not thro' your streets like a wild beast trail'd.

Hara. You thus may win the lords to set you free.

Samson. In nothing I'll comply that's scandalous
Or sinful by our law --- Brethren, farewell:
Your kind attendance now, I pray forbear.

Micah. So may'st thou act as serves his glory best.

Sam. Let but that spirit (which first rush'd on me
In the camp of Dan) inspire me at my need,

Then shall I make Jehova's glory known,
 Their idol God, shall from his presence fly,
 Scatter'd like sheep before the God of Hosts.

A I R.

Samson. Thus when the sun from's wat'ry bed,
 All curtain'd with a cloudy red,
 Pillows his chin upon an orient wave ;
 The wand'ring shadow's ghastly pale
 All troop to their infernal jail,
 Each fetter'd ghost slips to his several grave.

Micah. With might endu'd above the sons of men,
 Swift as the light'ning's glance his errand execute,
 And spread his name among the heathen round.

A I R.

The holy one of Isr'el be thy guide,
 The angel of thy birth stand by thy side :
 To fame immortal go,
 Heav'n bids the strike the blow ;
 The Holy One of Isr'el is thy guide.

S C E N E II.

Micah, Manoa, and chorus of Israelites.

Micah. Old Manoa, with youthful steps, makes
 haste,

To find his son, or bring us some glad news.

Manoa. I come my brethren, not to seek my son,
 Who at the feast does play before the lord ;
 But give you part with me, what hopes I have
 To work his liberty.

AIR and chorus of Philistines at a distance.

Great Dagon has suddu'd our foe,
 And brought their boasted hero low ;
 Sound out his pow'r in notes divine,
 Praise him with mirth, high chear, and wine.

Manoa. What noise of joy was that ? it 're the
 sky.

Micah. Thy shout and sing to see their dreaded foe,
Now captive, blind, delighting with his strength.

Manoa. Cou'd my inheritance but ransom him.
Without my patrimony, having him.
The richest of my tribe.

Micah. Sons care to nurse
Their parents in old age ; but you, your son.
A I R.

Manoa. How willing my paternal love
The weight to share
Of filial care,
And part of sorrow's burden prove :
Tho' wand'ring in the shades of night,
Whilst I have eyes he want no light.

Micah. Your hopes of his delivery seem not vain,
In which all Israel's friends participate.

Manoa. I know your friendly minds, and —
[A symphony here of horror and confusion.]
Heav'n ! what noise ?
Horribly loud, unlike the former shout.

Chorus of Philistines at a distance.
Hear us, our God ! O hear our cry !
Death ! ruin ! fall'n ! no help is nigh :
O mercy, heav'n ! we sink ! we die !

Micah. Noise call you this ? an universal groan,
As if the world's inhabitation perish'd !
Blood, death, and ruin at their utmost point !

Manoa. Ruin indeed ! Oh they have slain my son !

Micah. Thy son is rather slaying them ; that cry
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.
But see, my friends,
One hither speeds, an Hebrew of our tribe.

S C E N E III.

*Manoa, Micah, and an Israelite Officer. Chorus of
Israelites.*

Officer. Where shall I run, or which way fly the
thoughts
C

Of this most horrid fight? O countrymen!
You're in this sad event too much concern'd.

Micah. The accident was loud, we long to know
from whence.

Officer. Let me recover breath; it will burst forth.

Manca. Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.

Officer. Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fall'n.

Manoa. Sad! not to us: but now relate by whom.

Officer. By Samson done.

Manca. The sorrow lessens still,

And nigh converts to joy.

Officer. Ch Manoa!

In vain I would refrain;---the evil tale

Too soon will rudely pierce thy aged ear.

Manoa. Suspence in news is torture; speak them out

Officer. Then take the worst in brief--Samson is dead.

Manca. The worst indeed! My hopes to free
him hence

Are blasted all; but death, who sets all free,

Hath paid his ransom now.

Micah. Yet, ere we give the reins to grief, say first
How dy'd he? Death to life is crown or shame.

Officer. Unwounded of his enemies he fell,

At once he did destroy, and was destroy'd.

The edifice were all were met to see,

Upon their heads, and on his own he pull'd.

Manoa. O lastly over-strong against thyself!

A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge:

Glorious, yet dearly bought!

A I R.

Ye sons of Israel now lament,

Your spear is broke, your bow's uncent;

Your glory's fled,

Amongst the dead

Great Samson lies,

For ev'r, ever clos'd his eyes.

S A M S O N.

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Chorus of Israelites.

Weep, Isr'el, weep a louder strain.
Samson, your strength, your hero's slain;
[A March.

Micah. The body comes; we'll meet it on the way
With laurels ever green, and branching palm;
Then lay it in its monument, hung round
With all his trophies and great acts enroll'd
In verse heroick, or sweet Lyrick song.

Manoa. There shall Isr'els valient youth resort,
And from his memory inflame their breasts
To matchless valour, whilst they sing his praise.

A I R.

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*Glorious hero. may thy grave,
Peace and honour ever have;
After all thy pains and woes,
Rest eternal sweet repose,*

Israelite Woman. The virgins too shall on their
feastful days
Visit his tomb with flow'rs, and there bewail
His loss unfortunate in nuptial choice.

Chorus of Virgins.

Bring the laurels, bring the bays,
Strew his hearse, and strew the ways.

A I R.

*May ev'ry hero fall like thee,
Thro' sorrow to felicity.*

S. A M S O N.

CHORUS repeated.

Bring the laurels bring the bays
Strew his hearse, and strew the ways.

Manoa. Come, come; no time for lamentation
now;

No cause for grief; Samson like Samson fell;
Both life and death heroick. To his foes
Ruin is left; to him eternal fame.

A I R.

*Let the bright seraphims in burning row,
Their loud, up-listed angel-trumpets blow;
Let the cherubick host, in tuneful choirs,
Touch their immortal harps with golden wires;*

CHORUS.

Let their celestial concerts all unite,
Ever to sound his praise in endless blaze of light.

F I N I S.

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